

**More Access, Less Backlog:
Implementing Basic Processing at the Kansas Historical Society**

PROJECT SUMMARY

Purposes and goals of the project:

The primary purpose of this project is to give the public throughout the world, as well as Society staff assisting them, multiple portals to high level contents information about all archival holdings in the state archives and the Society's manuscripts collection.

This project is primarily a processing proposal with a limited preservation component.

Specific goals of the project are:

- **Basic processing:** Eliminate current backlogs by adding contents to finding media for state archives and manuscripts, create basic content information for all unprocessed state archives series and manuscript collections including microfilm, create an authority database for state agencies and major subdivisions with brief summaries of provenance and function to aid in future cataloging, create standardized contents descriptions for records common to multiple agencies and counties, note series or collections that may be candidates for reappraisal or deaccessioning review, determine the provenance for all state records, and develop a work flow and procedures model that ensures that future accessions can be processed promptly without accumulating backlogs
- **Preservation:** Tag records found needing immediate preservation treatment.

Significance and relationship to NHPRC goals and objectives

Holdings document many topics, from missionaries' and Indian agencies' attempts to "civilize" Native peoples on the Plains and the territorial "Bleeding Kansas" era—a precursor of the Civil War—to the modern period. Topics and descriptions reflect the broader American experience and include Native Americans, homesteading, agriculture, land distribution, railroads, the military, immigrant colonies, and social reform.

This project is a perfect vehicle to implement the Commission's mission, vision, and goals.

The project as a whole reflects NHPRC Goal 4, “Support institutions that promote preservation, dissemination, and use of historical records.” More specifically the project protects individual rights and increased understanding of our history and culture (NHPRC Vision statement) through improved descriptions and access points to state government records; invigorates and extends a fully developed partnership among the states and NHPRC to fund the development of the national archival system (Objective 3.3) by adding previously uncataloged records to Web based catalogs, EAD records, and the Archon user interface (www.archon.org); promotes records preservation, access, and utilization, including supporting institutions that acquire, preserve, and promote ready use of electronic records, especially in classrooms (Objective 4.1) by allowing researchers, teachers, students, and staff access to information about the contents of thousands of state archives records series and manuscript accessions and collections now uncataloged or described only in the most basic of terms with little or no content or subject access; and promotes the education and training of professional archivists (Goal 6).

Summary of plan of work during the grant period

Staff will survey collections to confirm work can proceed as planned; prioritize tasks for each project archivist, and ensure hardware and software to be used for recording information is functional (July-Aug. 2008). Three project staff will be hired: two with NHPRC funding, the other with state funds. The project staff will create contents information in the Archon database/interface for previously undescribed manuscript collections and state archives series, including microfilm. The project staff will survey archival holdings to make sure that any collections or series not previously described are recorded, examine the records and papers and enter descriptive summaries at the series level (state records) and collection level (manuscripts) in Archon, make note of series or collections that might be candidates for deaccessioning review, flag state archives series or accessions that might be consolidated (processing), and tag series or

collections needing immediate preservation treatment (preservation). Archon can subsequently export records to both MARC and EAD formats. Archon will also be used to create EAD records at the collection level (manuscripts) or record group or subgroup level (state archives) for our website (Sept. 2008-May 2010).

Products to be completed during the grant period

Data on state archives series and manuscript collections will be entered into Archon which will be available on-line to the public. Additionally from Archon, data in MARC format will be exported to OCLC, the Society's local on-line catalog, the statewide Kansas Library Catalog; data with EAD tags supplied by Archon will be exported as web pages to the Society's website.

Names, titles, institutions, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses of the project director and key personnel

All are affiliated with the Kansas Historical Society, 785-272-8681.

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Patricia Michaelis, director, library and archives division, ext. 270, pmichaelis@kshs.org

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Christine Desmuke, database administrator, IT staff, administration division, ext. 253, cdesmuke@kshs.org

Performance objectives

Primary objectives will be the number of previously-undescribed state archives series and manuscripts collections, including microfilm, for which contents information has been added as a result of this grant and the percentages of the state archives and manuscripts backlog that have been eliminated.